

SENATE RESOLUTION 149

By Akbari

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of Brent Renaud.

WHEREAS, we were greatly saddened to learn of the tragic death of Brent Renaud, an award-winning journalist and documentary filmmaker who was recently killed by Russian forces near Kyiv, Ukraine; and

WHEREAS, a native of Memphis who grew up in Little Rock, Arkansas, Mr. Renaud was working on a documentary about the global refugee crisis resulting from the Russian invasion of Ukraine when he fell prey to that violence himself, sacrificing his life in the cause of truth; and

WHEREAS, that Brent Renaud died telling the stories of people imprisoned in one of humanity's darkest situations is no surprise, because that is the function he performed as a journalist for his entire career, usually in partnership with his brother and film collaborator, Craig Renaud; and

WHEREAS, described by a colleague as "small in stature, but big in heart, filled with grit, determination, and courage," Brent Renaud utilized these attributes to the fullest in his documentary projects; he always endeavored to bring context, understanding, and empathy to complicated stories involving cultures foreign to our own; and

WHEREAS, some of his earliest credits were on documentaries about America's wars in Afghanistan and Iraq; a multi-part series called *Off to War* resulted from the Renaud brothers being embedded with a unit of the Arkansas National Guard for their tour in Iraq, thus marking a first in television history; and

WHEREAS, *Off to War* earned Brent and Craig Renaud a nomination for Outstanding Directorial Achievement in Documentary from the Directors Guild of America, as well as top

awards from the Overseas Press Club of America, the San Francisco International Film Festival, and the International Documentary Association; and

WHEREAS, they also made two documentaries about the veterans of these wars, *Taking the Hill*, about returning veterans, and *Warrior Champions: From Baghdad to Beijing*, about four severely injured soldiers training for the 2008 Paralympic Games; and

WHEREAS, Brent and Craig Renaud were particularly concerned about the plight of Haiti in the face of natural disaster and made two short documentaries for *The New York Times* that examined how Haitians survived the first post-earthquake year; their second film about Haiti, a heartbreaking piece focused on its children, won an Edward R. Murrow Award and a duPont-Columbia Award; and

WHEREAS, Brent Renaud's final film, titled *Haiti Hospital*, is in post-production; and

WHEREAS, the Renaud brothers made some remarkable films about migrants and migration, including *Vanguard: Arming the Mexican Cartels*, which won them another duPont-Columbia Award; and

WHEREAS, in *Dope Sick Love*, they provided a raw, realistic look at drug addiction and drug culture in America and garnered an Emmy nomination for Best Documentary; and

WHEREAS, the Renaud brothers examined the impact on rural Arkansas of the flood of cheap methamphetamine coming from Mexico in *Meth Storm*; and

WHEREAS, their 2016 documentary, *Shelter*, focused on Covenant House, a New Orleans shelter that houses and supports some of "the most damaged population of youth that exists in society today"; and

WHEREAS, some of the most lauded Renaud projects were about America's public schools; *Little Rock: 50 Years Later* marked the anniversary of school desegregation in their home state and chronicled the progress made since that time; and

WHEREAS, Brent and Craig Renaud won a prestigious Peabody Award for *Last Chance High*, which depicted in harrowing detail the everyday life of a Chicago school serving children with severe behavioral problems; and

WHEREAS, a Neiman Fellow, Brent Renaud had served as a visiting distinguished professor of journalism ethics at the University of Arkansas; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED TWELFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, that we honor the memory of Brent Renaud and pay tribute to his enduring legacy of documenting the human experience with insight and compassion.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we extend our sympathy and condolences to Craig Renaud and the other family members, friends, and colleagues of Brent Renaud.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.